

**“The Wife of Bath’s Tale” from The Canterbury Tales** by Geoffrey Chaucer  
**Selection Test B**

**Critical Reading** *Identify the letter of the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.*

- \_\_\_ 1. What is the Wife of Bath’s purpose in telling about the disappearance of the elves in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”?
  - A. to introduce King Arthur and the queen
  - B. to get her listeners’ attention as she starts her tale
  - C. to foreshadow the later transformation of the old woman
  - D. to explain why the knight’s behavior was so shocking
  
- \_\_\_ 2. What is the Wife of Bath’s opinion of holy friars, according to “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”?
  - A. They are holy men who help all who ask.
  - B. They are a danger to women.
  - C. They are worse than the elves.
  - D. They are as useless as the elves.
  
- \_\_\_ 3. Why does the queen ask the king not to kill the knight in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”?
  - A. She thinks justice will be better served if he learns a lesson.
  - B. She thinks a woman should pass sentence on him.
  - C. She wants to make an example of him for other men.
  - D. She wants to avoid the loss of another of King Arthur’s knights.
  
- \_\_\_ 4. According to “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” why does the queen give the knight a chance to save his life?
  - A. She thinks it is more important to teach him a lesson than to kill him.
  - B. She knows that he is good at heart and will never rape another woman.
  - C. She thinks killing is too severe a punishment for such a common crime.
  - D. She believes that the knight will be loyal to her forever if she saves him.
  
- \_\_\_ 5. What question does the queen ask the knight in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”?
  - A. Why do men and women not agree on their roles?
  - B. What do all women desire above everything?
  - C. What kind of husband do most women want?
  - D. What must a man do to earn a woman’s love?
  
- \_\_\_ 6. In “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” what does the knight do after hearing the queen’s question and leaving her presence?
  - A. He searches all over and asks every woman he finds for the answer.
  - B. He leaves the kingdom and tries to find a safe place to hide.
  - C. He goes to prison because he could not answer the question.
  - D. He searches for the old woman to get her advice.
  
- \_\_\_ 7. What is the main idea of the story of Midas in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”?
  - A. Women do not want ugly men.
  - B. Women cannot keep a secret.
  - C. Some men look like animals.
  - D. Every man has some horrible secret.

- \_\_\_ 8. Based on the context of “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” what is the meaning of the word *extort* in these lines?
- ‘I will concede you this: you are to go / A twelvemonth and a day to seek and learn / Sufficient answer, then you shall return. / I shall take gages from you to extort / Surrender of your body to the court.’
- A. to enjoy
  - B. to offer up freely
  - C. to obtain by threat
  - D. to prevent
- \_\_\_ 9. What question does the old woman ask the knight after they are married in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”?
- A. Do you want me to be young and poor or old and wealthy?
  - B. Why do men want young, wealthy wives instead of older wives?
  - C. Do you want me to be young and faithless or old and faithful?
  - D. Do you want me to be young and rule our marriage or old and obedient?
- \_\_\_ 10. In “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” while the knight is returning to the castle, he sees young maidens dancing in the woods. When he rides up, he finds only the old woman. What can you infer about the woman from these events?
- A. She is blind and did not see him coming or she would have escaped.
  - B. She is an elf or fairy, and she has transformed herself into an old woman.
  - C. She was too old and unable to slip away with the younger ladies.
  - D. She was sent by the queen to meet him in order to help him find the answer.
- \_\_\_ 11. Based on the context of this sentence from “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” what is the meaning of the word *anguish*?
- Great was the anguish churning in his head / When he and she were piloted to bed; / He wallowed back and forth in desperate style. / His ancient wife lay smiling all the while . . .
- A. pleasure
  - B. nervousness
  - C. eagerness
  - D. torment
- \_\_\_ 12. Based on the context, what is the meaning of the word *churl* in this sentence from “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”?
- You are no gentleman, though duke or earl. / Vice and bad manners are what make a churl.
- A. a humorless person
  - B. dangerous and wicked person
  - C. a rude and mean person
  - D. a wealthy person

## Vocabulary and Grammar

- \_\_\_ 13. Which vocabulary word best completes this sentence?  
The knight \_\_\_\_\_ the old woman to tell him how he could save his life.
- A. esteemed
  - B. bequeathed
  - C. implored
  - D. related
- \_\_\_ 14. Which of these vocabulary words is incorrectly used?
- A. The old woman gave a *contemptuous* snort when the knight said she was not well-born.
  - B. The queen *implored* her husband to give the knight's fate into her hands.
  - C. She denied their marriage was a *misalliance*, but if it was, the knight got the better deal.
  - D. The knight *rebuked* his wife for her help and relied on her judgment in all things.
- \_\_\_ 15. Which sentence incorrectly uses the italicized vocabulary word?
- A. The Wife of Bath *relates* a story of a knight and an old woman.
  - B. The knight *bequeathed* the old woman to tell him what all women want.
  - C. The knight showed *prowess* in battle but uncertainty in dealing with women.
  - D. The *esteemed* King Arthur granted his wife the privilege of passing judgment.
- \_\_\_ 16. Which sentence correctly uses the semicolon and conjunctive adverb?
- A. The king condemned the knight to death; however, the queen wished to save the knight.
  - B. Nevertheless, the old woman; whom he met in the forest, told him the answer.
  - C. Not certain if he had the right answer; nonetheless, the knight spoke up confidently.
  - D. Alone in the bedchamber with the old woman; however, the knight fidgeted mightily.
- \_\_\_ 17. Which is the best correction of this run-on sentence?  
To find the answer to the question, the knight talked to every woman in the kingdom no answer satisfied him, because no two of them agreed.
- A. Change the comma after question to a semicolon and add *however*.
  - B. Add a semicolon after *because*.
  - C. Add a semicolon after *kingdom*.
  - D. Add a semicolon after *him*.

## Essay

18. In an essay, describe the setting of "The Wife of Bath's Tale" and explain how its setting affects the plot. Then explain how the plot would be different if the setting were changed. Give at least two examples from "The Wife of Bath's Tale" to support your ideas.
19. Based on "The Wife of Bath's Tale," is the Wife of Bath a modern women? How well would she fit in twenty-first century America? Do her views of the role of women in society match those of most women today? How would today's men regard her views? In an essay, explore these questions. Give at least two examples from "The Wife of Bath's Tale" to support your opinions.